

From: VM
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/19/01 7:25pm
Subject: comment on antitrust settlement with Microsoft

1. As a web developer, my job has become increasingly more difficult by Microsoft's abuse of its monopoly power. Now that they have acquired browser dominance through illegal means, they have slowly but surely began to make changes to their dominant browser so that web developers such as myself must start using Microsoft-specific code to make sure our web pages appear okay in their browser (Internet Explorer). This has meant that some of the pages I develop that look okay on Microsoft's browser will NOT look okay using another company's browser. Since I would like the web pages I develop to have as much hits as possible, I am thus forced to make two versions, one that works with most browsers and one that works with Microsoft's browser. This has led to increased development time and development cost.
2. Though Microsoft pays lip service to following "web standards", their web development tools (ASP, Frontpage), by default, create proprietary features which prevent other browsers from viewing pages created with those tools properly.
3. When I use non-Microsoft web servers such as Apache as well as non-Microsoft CGI technology such as Cold Fusion, PHP, recent versions of Internet Explorer have caused problems. Functions that used to work with older versions of Internet Explorer (when it was not yet the dominant browser) no longer work. Web users thus get the impression that there is something wrong with the site when in fact it is their browser (because it doesn't conform to web standards) that is at fault.
4. Despite the fact that their multimedia-streaming technology is inferior to offerings by Real and Apple, Microsoft through its dominance of the desktop is forcing users to use Windows Media Player at the expense of Real Audio/Video and Apple's Quicktime.
5. Palm users are starting to have difficulties syncing their PDAs with certain versions of Windows--may be because Microsoft has a competing product: Microsoft PocketPC.
6. It is virtually impossible to purchase PCs without having to pay for Microsoft Windows even if the buyer will be using Linux or other OSes. If you will do rudimentary checks with most PC sellers (Gateway, Compaq, HP, IBM, Acer, Dell), they will inform you that you cannot buy the PC without paying for Microsoft Windows. If you say you will be installing Linux, they will say their contract with Microsoft prevents them selling you a "bare" PC without an OS--they

will lose their OS discounts if they do so.

9. There are rumors that after the settlement is completed, Microsoft plans to go on a buying spree and purchase their rivals outright.

Suggestions:

1. Force Microsoft to divest itself of the browser (Internet Explorer) and prevent them from creating their own proprietary browser.
2. Make Internet Explorer public-domain and placed under the control of an open-source standards body.
3. In the interim, make sure all versions of Internet Explorer conform to all web standards and if they are not, have Microsoft pull them from use and recode them--to be tested by the WWC (Worldwide Web Consortium).
4. Have all versions of Microsoft web servers, web development tools, CGI technology (IIS, Frontpage, ASP) conform to all web standards and if they are not, have Microsoft pull them from use and recode them--to be tested by the WWC (Worldwide Web Consortium).
5. Have Microsoft pay monetary damages to companies they have harmed by their illegal activities: Netscape, Apple, Intel, Borland International, Novell, etc.
6. Have Microsoft include Real and Apple multimedia technology with Windows.
7. Have Microsoft include Palm technology with Windows and make sure they work well.
8. Disallow Microsoft from giving discounts to PC manufacturers. There must be uniform pricing to prevent Microsoft from using monetary enticements to prevent PC manufacturers from selling "bare" PCs or PCs with other OSes pre-installed.
9. Disallow Microsoft from purchasing or merging with companies that offer rival software or are dominant in their category.

These suggestions, if implemented, will ensure competition and greater innovation in the computer arena.

Thank you for your time.

Vicente Malixi

--